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EXAMINING HOW FEMALE BODIES IN ADVERTISING IMPACT WOMEN'S BODY
ESTEEM AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD BRAND

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1950s, beauty norms represented in advertising have become thinner, contributing to increased numbers of women turning to extreme measures to attain idealized beauty standards. In response, consumers have called for organizations to highlight natural beauty in their advertising. This study explores the phenomenon by examining women's body esteem, attitudes toward organizations, and purchase intent immediately following exposure to two different types of advertisements, one containing idealized female bodies and the other containing more natural female bodies. A survey using the pre- and post-test design was created and distributed to women over the age of 18 in the U.S. Results indicate participants' attitude toward Aerie significantly increased after being exposed to its advertisement promoting a positive message about natural beauty and appreciation for all body types.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Beauty, while considered subjective and dependent on the eye of the beholder, has continually been standardized in societies, largely by the media. In the U.S., the standard of beauty in media has become “thinner” since the 1950s (Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980; Spitzer, Henderson, & Zivian, 1999). The average weight of women regarded as symbols of ideal beauty, such as models in print advertisements and fashion runways, actresses as well as beauty pageant contestants, has been decreasing while the average weight of American women has increased (Garner et al., 1980; Spitzer et al., 1999). According to Johnson (2014), an individual is exposed to an average of 362 marketing messages each day. Considering the average number of messages in 1985 was 296, one can easily conclude not only has the competition for brands to be seen increased, but the probability of consumers being influenced by these messages has also augmented.

This blitz of marketing messages filled with “beauty norms,” exemplifying a dramatic gap between the idealized standard of beauty (the “ideal” weight of a woman) and the reality (the actual weight of the average woman), has cultivated American female consumers to aspire to unrealistic expectations of beauty (Spettigue & Henderson, 2004). This has led to a spike in the number of women and young girls dissatisfied with their bodies, who develop unhealthy habits and eating disorders or turn to cosmetic surgery in order to achieve the idealistic standards of beauty portrayed in these marketing messages (Johnson, 2014). According to a report by YWCA USA (2008) titled “Beauty at Any Cost,” nearly 11.7 million cosmetic procedures were performed in the year 2007, 500 percent more than the overall number of procedures performed from 1996 to 2006; 17 percent of women smoke to lose weight; nearly 10 million women suffer

from an eating disorder such as bulimia or anorexia; and more than half of teenage girls turn to unhealthy behavior such as skipping meals, fasting, smoking cigarettes, vomiting, and taking laxatives to control their weight. The phenomenon of women obsessing over their weight and their appearance has become so prominent it is now considered a “normal” part of the female experience in North America. Psychologists have coined the term ‘normative discontent’ to explain the idea that it is normal for a female to be unhappy with her weight (Oliver-Pyatt, 2003).

As a result, consumers have begun to call for a change in the marketing practices of fashion and beauty brands, especially with the excessive use of photo retouching in advertisements. In 2009, Ralph Lauren came under substantial criticism for printing an advertisement in which the model’s body was heavily distorted (“Ralph Lauren,” 2008). The advertisement showed a retouched image of the model Filippa Hamilton –5 feet 10 inches tall and weighing 120 pounds –appearing emaciated, with her head larger than her waist. After being released in a department store in Japan, the advertisement for Ralph Lauren’s Blue Label jeans was quickly shared online and generated millions of negative comments calling the advertisement “sickly,” “grotesque,” and “unrealistic,” attributing the high percentage of women suffering from eating disorders to such ads and demanding that the company apologize for the extreme doctoring of the image (“Ralph Lauren,” 2009). A week later, a second advertisement emerged, in which model Valentina Zelyaeva seemed so thin that her ribs were poking out through her shirt. After attempting to remedy the negative backlash by accusing the original “whistleblower” for unfair use, the company finally issued a statement explaining the advertisement had been “mistakenly released and used,” and that “going forward, will take every precaution to ensure that the calibre of [the] artwork represents [the] brand appropriately”

(“Second Ralph Lauren,” 2009, para. 21). These two cases, occurring one after another, revealed that excessive use of photo retouching was not an isolated incident (“Second Ralph Lauren,” 2009).

More recently, the beauty brand Victoria’s Secret has also come under fire for its “photoshop fails,” and its promotion of unrealistic body images. Since 2012, the brand has been criticized for excessive use of photo retouching, producing images of models with thigh gaps, augmented breasts, brittle waists, and tiny buttocks (Ciambriello, 2014). Its 2014 ad for the “body” bra, featuring thin, long-legged, and large chested supermodels accompanied by the message, “The Perfect ‘Body,’” produced an internet outrage. This incident became an opportunity for consumers to remind Victoria’s Secret of the role brands hold in cultivating an obsession with unhealthy body images and demands beauty brands to be ethical in the messages they deliver to their audiences through their advertisements (Ciambriello, 2014). A petition was created, stating the advertisement “aimed at making them feel insecure about their bodies [and] perpetuate low self-esteem among women who are made to feel that their bodies are inadequate and unattractive because they do not fit into a narrow standard of beauty” (“Apologise for,” 2014, para. 6). Additionally, the petition asserted such marketing messages “contribute to a culture that encourages serious health problems such as negative body image and eating disorders” (“Apologise for,” 2014, para. 6) and demanded “Victoria’s Secret to take responsibility for their irresponsibility...to change the advertisements and pledge not to use such marketing in the future” (“Apologise for,” 2014, para. 9-10). With 33,001 signatures, the petition successfully brought an apology and promise of change from the brand.

In response to the increasingly popular demand from consumers to be more ethical in their marketing messages, various beauty brands such as Dove and Aerie have begun to shift

their marketing strategies to portray beauty in ways that are more responsible and realistic, emphasizing the value of diverse, natural beauty. In 2004, Dove became one of the first beauty brands to initiate a permanent change in the depiction of women and the concept of ideal beauty in advertising (Drewniany & Jewler, 2011). In the early 2000s, Unilever had conducted in-depth interviews with women from 10 countries and were shocked to find that very few women believed themselves to be beautiful. More precisely, only 2 percent thought they were beautiful, 6 percent thought they were pretty, and a dismal 9 percent thought they were attractive in some way (Drewniany & Jewler, 2011). Although the women interviewed were spread across a variety of cultures, one factor remained the same: they were all dissatisfied with their appearances and did not consider themselves beautiful (Drewniany & Jewler, 2011).

Dove saw an opportunity for a revolution and jumped on it. The U.S. Director of Marketing, Phillippe Harousseau, states the goal to increase the brand's presence in the market then became a mission to change women's perceptions of their bodies: "We are dedicated to debunking the stereotypes –that beauty is only young, only blonde, only thin, only white" (as cited in Drewniany & Jeweler, 2011, p. 55). The Dove Campaign for real beauty was built on three core principles: a commitment to understanding both the meaning and the consequences of "beauty" for women; actively promoting a more inclusive, more democratic ideal of beauty by using real women; being an agent of change positively affecting the lives of young girls through a global initiative, the Dove Self-Esteem Fund.

The advertisements, spreading quickly across other countries such as the U.S. and Canada, included "real women" to deliver these core messages, with the women's "flaws" not only still visible in the advertisements but rather, flaunted; these images were accompanied by check-boxes with words such as "withered or wonderful?" depicting that beauty is not only

young, and “single eyelids or twice as nice?”, depicting that beauty is not only white (Drewniany & Jeweler, 2008). At a time when thin models airbrushed to perfection were the norm in print advertisements, the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty was regarded as disruptive. Launched in the United Kingdom as one of the brand’s first advertisements for expansion into the hand and body market, it came across as a pleasant and welcome surprise to women, to whom Dove seemed to effectively communicate its desire to redefine the concept of beauty (Drewniany & Jeweler, 2008).

The effect was powerful enough to promote the brand, then solely known for its gentle facial cleansing products and overshadowed by its competitors, to a strong, competitive presence in the market for personal care products –now, having continued its Real Beauty campaign for more than 10 years, Dove has benefited from a significant increase in its sales, jumping from \$4 billion in 2014 from \$2.5 billion in its inaugural year (Neff, 2014).

Aerie is another example of a brand that has adopted a similar approach and achieved significant results (O’Connor, 2015). As an extension of the American Eagle brand, Aerie specializes in lingerie and loungewear for 15-21 year olds, to whom the importance of being attractive is constantly reiterated. Aerie has a developing line of beauty products including perfume and cosmetics, and is often compared to its competitor, Victoria’s Secret. Previously, Aerie had struggled to establish a significant presence in the market –single-handedly dominated by Victoria’s Secret –until winter of 2013, when it announced it would stop photo retouching their advertisements (O’Connor, 2015).

The Aerie “Real” campaign not only used images of models that had not been retouched, but also used models whose bodies are closer in resemblance to that of an average American woman, rather than emulating the thin, idealized standard of beauty. One particular

advertisement showed a heart-shaped tattoo on the inner side of her left arm, with her poses seeming to show off this mark that would usually be considered a “flaw” in conventional advertising. Since then, Aerie has continued its campaign and such images are now used as the “bra guide” on Aerie’s website, designed to provide its customers with a real experience of a bra fitting rather than simply exhibiting the brand’s slimmest size (Ciambriello, 2014).

Aerie’s senior director of marketing, Dana Seguin, stated Aerie will continue its brand positioning to promote “real beauty,” and that the change has been relatively easy for the brand: “If anything it was more of a mindset change...as a company and an industry we're just used to retouching a scar or covering a tattoo, and that might've been the hardest part. Making sure nothing was touched. The girls are beautiful on their own. It sounds hysterical for anyone not working in the business but that might've been the toughest part” (qtd. in Beer, 2014, para. 7). This relatively new, consumer-friendly, and ethical approach to marketing seems to be effective; since Aerie has stopped retouching the models in their advertisements, its sales have increased by 9 percent.

As exemplified by brands such as Aerie and Dove, consumers seem to be favoring brands that highlight natural beauty. Key figures in popular culture, such as singers Colbie Caillat and Meghan Trainor have added their voices to the campaign for natural beauty, speaking out against the pressures females face in order to feel attractive and therefore worthy in society. In her song, “Try,” Caillat (2014) outlines the routines that a typical girl must go through, to “put your make-up on, get your nails done, curl your hair, run the extra mile, keep it slim so they like you,” and “get your sexy on...take it off, this is what you want, to belong, so they like you.” In the conclusion of her song, Caillat encourages girls to be love themselves for who they are, instead of changing themselves in order to feel liked and accepted.

This study's purpose is to examine if women's perceptions of brands change after viewing print advertisements from Victoria's Secret, utilizing idealized body images, and Aerie, using more realistic body images.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Simply put, the central hypothesis guiding *cultivation* is “those who spend more time watching television are more likely to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most common and recurrent messages of the television world, compared to those who watch less television but are otherwise comparable in terms of important demographic characteristics” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 2002, p. 34). The idea of *cultivation* was first formulated by George Gerbner in the 1960s, and introduced in his project called *cultural indicators*.

Previously, media research had typically used experiments to “determine if differences in particular features of media messages could explain immediate responses in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors” (Potter, 2014, p. 1016). Instead of this micro focused approach – concerning questions such as how people select messages, how they process information, or what effects the messages exert on people during or immediately after exposure – Gerbner opted for a macrosystems approach in which he could explore widespread meanings across the entire media landscape, and the influence that the daily exposure of media messages could gradually exert on the public (Potter, 2014). With his new approach, he wanted to draw attention to three specific parts: the institutions disseminating messages, the messages, and the publics receiving the messages. Gerbner’s *cultural indicators* paradigm comprised of three prongs: the first, called *institutional process analysis*, intended to investigate the institutional processes, pressures, and constraints directing the massive production and flow of media messages. The second, *message system analysis*, focused on the most prevalent messages in the media across institutions and their overarching patterns. The third, *cultivation analysis*, examined the relationship between

media exposure and the audience's beliefs and behaviors in reaction over a long period (Gerbner et al., 2002). Providing a broad-based, integrated approach to studying mass media, the research accounted for the rise of mass mediated public message systems which allowed mass production and rapid distribution of messages, reaching heterogeneous and anonymous audiences across previous barriers such as time, space, and social grouping. Gerbner argued this resulted in a collective *cultivation* of the public consciousness through the mass media, a phenomenon in which communities cultivate "shared and public notions about facts, values, and contingencies of human existence" (Gerbner, 1969, p. 137-138) through repeated exposure to mass media and its messages over a long period of time; he specifically chose the term *cultivation* to highlight the significance of focusing on the "the collective context within which, and in response to which, different individual and group selections and interpretations of messages take place" (Gerbner, 1969, p. 139).

Gerbner's early studies of *cultivation* focused on the effect of media violence on its audiences, especially through television. As TV became the dominant mass communication medium, Gerbner predicted its influence by naming it the "new state religion," the replacement force that would maintain social order by "filling the breach with formulaic, repetitive stories that were ritualistically consumed from cradle to grave by a large and heterogeneous mass audience" (Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2015, p. 676).

In 1976, Gerbner worked with Gross to expand on message system analysis and cultivation analysis to observe the consequences of growing up and living in a cultural environment dominated by TV. The study recognized the dominance of television in media and its presence as "the flagship of industrial mass culture" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 177) serving as "the central cultural arms of American society" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 175). Previous

research had been conducted to evaluate the influence of violence portrayed on TV as a stimulus of individual aggression. However, Gerbner and Gross (1976) stated the consequences of living in a society ruled by large-scaled mass media disseminating organized messages may be more far-reaching. They predicted, rather than inducing aggression, the messages portrayed through TV may significantly influence the viewers' perceptions of reality. Gerbner and Gross (1976) theorized the substance of the viewers' common consciousness would be *cultivated* by the TV, and therefore, viewers who frequently watch TV would be susceptible to the messages it delivers and therefore prone to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most prevalent messages of the fictional world portrayed by the TV.

In the beginning stages of the theory's development, Gerbner and Gross (1976) conducted surveys asking TV viewers about their assumptions and attitudes toward life and society, and the responses were analyzed to determine whether the viewers' perception of reality imitated those portrayed by the TV. Indeed, their research supported living in the world of television cultivates conceptions of its own conventionalized reality. As it was evident cultivation deals directly with the amount of media exposure, it became necessary to distinguish the difference in the viewers' perception of reality, by segmenting the time devoted to viewing television and creating distinctions among high, medium, and low frequency viewers, as well as demographics.

Heavy viewing was established as watching an average of four or more hours of TV per day, while *light viewing* involved watching less than two hours of TV per day (Chandler & Bushman, 2007). Additionally, the term *cultivation differentiation* was developed, to indicate the margin of difference in conceptions of reality between light and heavy viewers in the same demographic subgroups. *Cultivation differentiation* accounted for not only how television

viewing can distort the viewers' perceptions of reality, but also how other factors such as gender and age interact with the viewers' reception of the TV messages (Gerbner et al., 2002). It is important to note the determination of *light* and *heavy* viewing is made on a sample-by-sample basis, as the relative difference between participants' viewing levels are considered more important than a specific number of hours that constitutes each level. Often, the analysis of the relative differences in the level of viewing among participants is used to draw a general conclusion on the cultivation relationship –especially considering that a *light* modern viewer may be watching television for several hours a day (Gerbner et al., 2002).

A decade after the initial introduction of the theory, Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1980) introduced two new theoretical developments to reflect variations in viewers' susceptibility to cultivation: *mainstreaming* and *resonance*.

The first concept, *mainstreaming*, sought to explain “the sharing of the commonality among heavy viewers in those demographic subgroups whose light viewers hold divergent views” (Gerbner et al., 1980, p. 15). Recognizing TV as the dominant mass communication medium reaching the public without discrimination to factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status, Gerbner and colleagues (1980) found differences stemming from social forces and other factors indicating demographics were diminished due to cultivation by consistent exposure to the TV. They found heavy viewing may “moderate” the attitudes of those in demographics with extreme attitudes, and vice versa, resulting in a “convergence” of attitudes across different groups that reflect those portrayed by the TV (Gerbner et al., 1980). For example, while the light viewers of the more educated, higher income class were the least likely to be imbued with the virtual reality of the TV, the heavy viewers exhibited similar attitudes to

those of heavy viewers in other demographics, supporting the concept of *mainstreaming*, the tendency of heavy viewers across different demographics sharing the same outlook.

Glynn, Hoge, Reineke, Hardy, and Shanahan (2007) confirmed mainstreaming through their examination of relationships between viewers' exposure to talk shows such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and their willingness to support activist and interventionist government policies to protect families. They found conservatives who were heavy viewers of such shows –in which families and individuals face crises and are often in need of familial support –were more likely to support similar policies than those considered light viewers of the shows.

The second concept, *resonance*, described the effect of how a person's real life circumstances –or even, perceived circumstances –and TV viewing can combine to provide a “double dose” of congruent messages that resonate, amplifying cultivation. A hypothetical example would be an individual who frequently watches crime-related TV shows and learns that a crime has taken place in the neighborhood –this instance will fortify the fear of crime and the perceived reality that the world is a dangerous place. As a result, those living in areas prone to high-crime rates, who are more likely to witness crime, showed stronger relationships between amount of TV viewing and the likeliness to report that fear of crime is a very serious personal problem (Gerner et al., 1980).

Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorelli (2009) expanded upon such effects of *heavy viewing*. As heavy viewers were exposed to violence more frequently, over a long period of time, they were more likely to be profoundly affected by a heightened sense of risk and insecurity, possessing “exaggerated perceptions of victimization, mistrust, and danger, along with numerous inaccurate beliefs about crime and law enforcement” (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010, p. 339). In other words, heavy viewers were more likely to believe they would be involved in violence,

people could not be trusted, and most were simply looking out for themselves, a pattern that came to be known as the *mean world syndrome* (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010).

More recently, the correlation between heavy viewing and fear of crime has been proven to be stronger through several research examining cultivation to local news. In particular, Romer, Jamieson, and Aday (2003) offer strong evidence heavy viewers of the local news develop “heightened perceptions of crime risk on both a personal and societal level” (p. 99) which are independent of the true local crime rates.

Stereotypes

Though these earlier studies of cultivation primarily focused on TV’s influence on the viewers’ perception of violence, the theory later returned to the broad concept of *cultural indicators*, taking account of other topics, issues, and concerns to examine how repeated exposure to selective messages through a mass communication medium can shape the public’s perception of reality (Morgan et al., 2009). Research has been conducted to confirm the effect of *heavy viewing* on the viewers’ perception of reality and actions, in areas such as gender, minority and age-role stereotypes, health, science, the family, educational achievements and aspirations, politics, religion, the environment and other topics (Morgan et al., 2009).

Research examining the relationship between stereotypes and *heavy viewing* have observed participants’ attitudes toward sex roles, gender norms, mental illness, and racial minorities. Ferris, Smith, Greenberg and Smith (2007) found young male viewers who frequently watched reality dating shows were more likely to possess stereotypical beliefs about dating, such as “men are sex-driven,” “dating is a game,” and “women are sex objects” (p. 501). Similarly, Ward (2002) found those who frequently viewed prime-time comedies, dramas, daytime soap operas, and music videos demonstrated an acceptance of sexual stereotypes, such as “females are

sex objects,” “males are sex-driven and can’t be faithful,” and “dating is a recreational sport” (p. 366).

Cultivation has also contributed to the sustenance of traditional images and aspirations, despite the recent social changes with which old-fashioned distinctions between gender roles have begun to fade. Although women’s roles in society have evolved significantly in the past few decades, Ex, Janssens, and Korzilius (2002) found female adolescents’ exposures to soap operas and sitcoms were related to the anticipation of their future roles as caretakers of their family and children, rather than as individuals outside of their homes. In a similar manner, Segrin and Nabi’s study (2002) found although the TV offers an ambivalent representation of marriage, university students who watched “romantic” programs expressed more idealistic views on romance, such as wishing to get married at a younger age and believing that their marriages will “last forever.”

The effect of *heavy viewing* on development of stereotypes can also be found in attitudes toward social issues such as mental illness. Diefenbach and West’s research (2007) showed due to the distorted portrayal of mental illness in the media, *heavy viewers* were more likely to perceive the mentally ill as the stereotypical violent criminals and believe the presence of mental health service locations in residential neighborhoods would pose a danger to their residents, therefore exhibiting less tolerance toward mental illness. Minnebo and Eggermont’s survey (2007) found *heavy viewers* possessed a stereotypical view of young people as substance users, due to the frequent portrayals of such scenarios on TV.

Negative stereotypical perceptions resulting from cultivation were especially prevalent with racial minorities. Although negative portrayals of minorities have decreased since the studies first began, racial perceptions still remain strongly distorted among heavy viewers; for

example, Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, and Ortiz (2007) observed viewers' perception of Latinos and their "criminality" was highly dependent on the amount of exposure to specific TV content and messages. Similarly, Mastro (2009) found though news sources depicted 39 percent of juveniles to be black, while the figures provided by the Department of Justice revealed that in reality, only 18 percent of juveniles are black.

Heuristic Model

Cultivation, a result of excessive media viewing, can have profound impacts on the viewers' perception of reality. How does cultivation take place? Cognitive processing scholars such as Shrum (1999, 2004) have documented and extended the conception of cultivation's cognitive mechanism, involving the heuristic model. According to Shrum (2004), due to heuristic reception and processing of messages, heavy TV viewers are more likely to use mental shortcuts to access the TV messages when making mental judgements. Since the repetition of TV messages allow them to be heuristically received and therefore cognitively readily accessible, heavy viewers tend to turn to them when constructing judgements about the world, especially based on frequency, recency, and vividness of the messages. Shrum (1999) found heavy viewers were able to provide faster responses to questions regarding social reality, implying that the answers more readily accessible. The model was once again confirmed when Shrum (2004) hypothesized and gathered data supporting heuristic processing would be greater during a telephone survey rather than a mail survey, as respondents would be pressured to answer more quickly in a phone survey and would more likely opt to take mental shortcuts. Bradley (2007) also confirmed the heuristic model using simulated neural networks to mimick memory and retrieval patterns, which showed a cultivation effect. The findings in Bradley's (2007) work supported Shrum's research and provided further evidence of the heuristic processing model.

Since its introduction, cultivation theory has become one of the three most-cited theories in mass communication research, along with agenda-setting and uses and gratification theories (Bryant & Miron, 2004); as of 2010, more than 500 studies relating directly to cultivation have been published, and more than 125 of those studies have been published after the year 2000 (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010).

Now, more than four decades after its initial introduction, it is evident cultivation theory has evolved and expanded to accommodate the changing media environment, branching into areas other than the one in which it was originally applied. In 2015, the theory is applied in different contexts. Whereas the media primarily comprised of broadcast TV, theatrical films, radio, and print media in the 1950s and 1960s, the modern society now enjoys an electronic, digital, and technological environment, involving cable channels and the internet. The new forms of media offer endless possibilities for cultivation, through mediums such as social media, on-demand video services, and more.

Cultivation and Video Games

Television had captured Gerbner's attention (1969) as it had been the primary mass communication medium in his time; it was widely available, far-reaching, and effective in dramatic story-telling –and video games are the modern equivalent. According to a NPD Group report (2010), the video game industry in the U.S. is the largest sector in the entertainment industry, generating close to \$15 billion per year. Video games also reach across various demographics segmented by age, race, and sex, with the power to deliver repetitive messages about race and ethnicity, gender stereotypes, and violence through its vivid imagery (Williams, 2006). The potential for cultivation through video games is quite large. Williams (2006) found evidence one month of playing a violent video game contributed to mean world syndrome as

well as increased belief that one would be physically attacked with a weapon in the real world.

Williams (2006) argued the life-like visuals as well as the scenarios in which the unrealistic elements are made to appear seemingly real could lead players to confuse the virtual reality with the actual reality. Williams (2006) also concluded the cultivation resulted directly from the content of the game, which was of a violent nature, rather than a more general or broad-based effect.

Similarly, Beullens, Roe, and Van den Bulck (2011) found playing racing games also contributed to a cultivation resulting in harmful effects, leading to adolescents' risky driving behaviors and intention to behave less safely while driving.

Behm-Morawitz and Ta (2014) explored the relationship between video game playing and the players' racial and ethnical stereotyping. The study highlighted the role of video games in racial cognition. While studying White college students, the researchers found video game usage was a stronger predictor of the students' perception of different races than real-life interactions, resulting in racial stereotyping. Considering minority stereotyping, such as portrayal of Blacks and Latinos to be more unkempt and prone to commit crimes, are still prevalent in video games, cultivation through video games may serve as another alarming example of how mass media can negatively distort the audience's perception of the world.

Another example of cultivation through video games is offered by Martins, Williams, and Harrison (2008). In their content analysis of female body imagery in video games, they found the majority of the 368 characters in the top 150 best-selling video games represented the unrealistic, thin ideal of the American society, possessing a lean yet busty body. The implications of the research involved concerns for the growing body image dissatisfaction of young girls in the U.S.

caused by sociocultural pressures, to which mass enculturation mediums such as video games may have contributed.

Cultivation and Advertising

Advertising as a medium of cultivation has been explored by numerous researchers such as Tan (1979), who observed the effect of TV beauty advertisements on adolescent male viewers' perception of social reality. The main objective of the research was to determine whether exposure to beauty commercials influenced the viewers' belief beauty is important in securing life success. The results revealed girls exposed to beauty commercials highlighting sex appeal perceived beauty as important to be popular with men, giving it higher ratings than did the girls exposed to other commercials. Additionally, they also rated beauty higher as a quality they personally regarded as important. In the categories of being a good wife and having a successful career, there was little difference between the two groups.

Tan (1979) recognized cultivation primarily observes the development of media effects over a period of time, during which viewers are exposed to the media message in a consistent and steady manner. As the research was based on short-term exposure, Tan (1979) suspected "if such effects can be attained from a single, saturated exposure to TV contents, it is very likely that long-term, repeated exposures (as those occurring in the real world) will yield stronger and lasting effects on viewers" (p. 288). This finding also provides a basis for concern, for young girls who may be cultivated to perceive the sex appeal of the messages as real and may become dissatisfied with their self-images. Several researchers have found that models used in magazine have grown thinner over time and they are not proper representations of the average American woman, as they are significantly thinner (Garner et al., 1980). This is evidenced in Spitzer and colleagues' study (1999) which analyzed the heights and weights to find body mass index scores

(BMI) of *Playboy* centerfold models from the year 1977 to 1996. Results showed that the average BMIs of the models ranged from 17.91 to 18.40, which are considered underweight. A content analysis conducted by Fouts and Burggraf (1999) also found an overrepresentation of underweight female characters and an underrepresentation of “overweight” female characters in prime-time television advertising, contrary to the true proportion in the general female population in the U.S.

Vonderen and Kinnally (2012) also attempted to examine the relationship between media exposure and body dissatisfaction. Using cultivation and social comparison theories, Vonderen and Kinnally (2012) studied the impact of media exposure on “internalization of the thin ideal and body dissatisfaction in context with other social/environmental factors like peer and parental attitudes” (p. 51). The study was designed to answer two questions: “whether television exposure plays a role in the internalization of the thin-ideal when juxtaposed with other media measures, the internal measure of self-esteem, as well as parental and peer attitudes and peer comparisons,” and “whether television exposure plays a role in body dissatisfaction when juxtaposed with other media measures, self-esteem, and other social influences such as parental and peer attitudes and peer comparisons” (p. 49-50). A survey was distributed to 417 undergraduate female students to assess the level of their media exposure, internalization of the thin ideal, comparisons with media figures and peers, and self-esteem. Results did not indicate significant connections between overall media exposure and internalization of the thin ideal, but rather significant correlations between exposure to specific TV genres and the internalization of the thin ideal. Vonderen and Kinnally (2012) concluded comparison with media figures was related to the internalization of the idealized beauty norm of being thin, and this directly affected self esteem. Based on these findings, the current study hypothesizes the following:

H1: Cultivation positively predicts women's scores on social attitudes toward appearance.

Additionally, the current study explores the difference in immediate effects between two types of advertising, one containing idealized female bodies and one without. Merchant (2002) sought to investigate the relationship among adolescent females' media consumption, self esteem, and body image. The study hypothesized "Exposure to print advertisements that contain idealized images of female bodies, as opposed to images of fashion accessories without bodies, will reduce adolescent viewer's satisfaction, body esteem, and self esteem" (Merchant, 2002, p. 53). Using a pre- and post-test research design, Merchant (2002) exposed 91 high school female students to color print advertisements selected from teen magazines; one half of the participants were shown print advertisements containing idealized female bodies, and the other were shown print advertisements simply containing fashion accessories without bodies.

Merchant (2002) found 68 percent of the participants compared themselves "at least sometimes" to media images, attributing their reasons to desires to "look pretty," "look like models," "be thin," and "get guys" (p. 78). Furthermore, the results showed after viewing advertisements containing idealized body images, the participants' anxiety increased, although many of the participants stated they were aware the images were "fake" and "unrealistic" (p. 84). Merchant (2002) concluded while there were no significant differences between two groups exposed to different media messages, individuals with higher levels of internalization of social attitudes and norms would have a higher level of body dissatisfaction. These results are the premise of the second and third hypotheses of the current study:

H2: Women's perceptions of body esteem and overall body image change after viewing lingerie ads.

H3: Those viewing an ad for Victoria's Secret will score lower on body esteem and body image compared to those viewing an ad for Aerie.

Advertising has become responsible for the increasing body image dissatisfaction among adolescent girls and women and reducing self-esteem, which has become so common that some researchers claim it is an unavoidable part of living in a Western society (Grogan, 2007). The phenomenon has become so problematic that brands such as Victoria's Secret have suffered severely for excessive usage of photo retouching to promote idealized body images in their advertisements. Venkat and Harold (2002) observed the effects of advertising-induced social comparison on consumers' purchase intent. Venkat and Harold (2002) first measured participants' fitness satisfaction and attractiveness satisfaction, then exposed them to advertisements featuring idealized bodies, after which their self-esteem and body image were once again measured. Venkat and Harold (2002) found the participants' purchase intent was differentiated by two factors: locus of control –the extent to which individuals believe they can control events affecting them –and gender. Females were more likely to be affected by the images of idealized bodies, and score lower on the self-esteem and body image scale after being exposed to advertisements. Purchase intent was found to be heavily dependent on locus of control, with internal locus products being less affected by the images and responding more favorably to the advertised products. This research led to the development of the two final hypotheses for the current study:

H4: Women's attitudes toward a brand, perception of an organization's reputation, and purchase intent of a brand will change after viewing lingerie ads.

H5: Those in the Victoria's Secret condition will have more negative attitudes toward the brand and be less likely to purchase lingerie compared to those viewing an ad for Aerie.

Chapter 3

Methods

An experiment was distributed online using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. An advertisement from Victoria's Secret ($n = 157$) was selected to exemplify idealized bodies. An advertisement from Aerie ($n = 158$) was selected to represent "real" bodies, due to the brand's decision to forego photo retouching in all of their advertisements (Appendix B).

Participants

Participants were 18 years of age or older ($N = 315$). The average age was 36.88 with a standard deviation of 13.16 and a range of 20 to 87 years of age. More than three-fourths of participants were Caucasian (81.9%), 6.0% were African-American, 7.3% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4.1% were Hispanic/Latino, and 2.0% were Native American.

Procedures

A "hit" was generated on Amazon Mechanical Turk. Once the "hit" was published, any female over the age of 18 living in the United States could complete the survey for a payment of \$0.50. After consenting to take the survey (Appendix A), participants answered questions regarding their media habits, body-esteem, body image, purchasing habits, and brand perceptions. Participants were then randomly assigned to view one of the two advertisements, after which they were asked the same self-esteem and body image questions, and others addressing attitude toward brand and purchase intent.

Stimuli

Two print advertisements, one exemplifying idealized body image and the other with "real" body image, were selected as stimuli. With the recent controversy surrounding Victoria's Secret and its use of photo retouching, one of its advertisements was selected as the stimulus for

the idealized body image exposure. One of Aerie's print advertisements was selected, given its commitment to stop retouching models in their advertisements. Both of the advertisements portrayed young women in underwear, with the message conveying "Love Your Body" (Appendix B).

Measures

Media Use (Cultivation). To measure participants' level of cultivation an additive scale was used. Participants were asked to indicate the amount of minutes they spend each week on the following forms of media: reading fashion magazines (e.g. *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Marie Claire*); reading entertainment magazines (e.g. *Star*, *Ok!*, *People*); reading online women's magazines (e.g. *Glamour*, *Cosmopolitan*); visiting makeup websites (e.g., *MAC* or *Maybelline*); visiting makeup blogs (e.g., *Makeup Bag*, *Temptalia*, *TheMakeUpGirl*); watching reality television shows (e.g., *The Real Housewives*, *America's Next Top Model*); reading national newspapers; watching network news programs; watching a cable news channel; reading news magazines; reading online newspapers; scanning the stories on an online news vendor. The total minutes were added to get a measure of cultivation.

Social Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ). The scale originally had 21 items (Heinberg, Thompson & Stormer, 1995) on a five-point scale. The current study only included 17 items. These questions were placed on seven-point Likert scales where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

There were 10 questions for the *internalization* dimension: I would like my body to appear like the women who appear in lingerie ads; Lingerie commercials that show women who show women who are in good physical shape make me wish I was in better physical shape; I wish to look to like the women in lingerie ads; I tend to compare to my body to people in

magazines and on television; Lingerie ads of physically fit women make me wish I had more muscle tone; I wish I looked like women pictured in magazines who model lingerie; I often read magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, and *Glamour* and compare my appearance to the models; How I look does not affect my mood in social situations; I compare my physique to that of women pictured in lingerie ads; I compare my appearance to people whom I consider very attractive ($\alpha = .89$; $M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.25$).

There were 7 questions asked for the *awareness* dimension. Items included: I believe lingerie looks better on women that are in good physical shape; In our society, fat people are regarded as unattractive; Attractiveness is very important if you want to get ahead in our culture; It's important for people to look attractive if they want to succeed in today's culture; A physically fit woman is admired for her looks more than someone who is not fit and toned; In today's society it is not important to always look attractive; People find individuals who are in shape more attractive than individuals that are not in shape ($\alpha = .84$; $M = 5.40$, $SD = .94$).

Body Esteem. The Body Esteem Scale (Mendelson, White & Mendelson, 1998), originally designed with five scale points (1 = Never, 5 = Always), was modified to include seven scale points (1 = Never, 7 = Always). The original scale contained 23 statements and only 19 were included in this study. Questions stated: I am preoccupied with trying to change my body weight; I think my appearance would help me get a job; I like what I see when I look in the mirror; There are lots of things I would change about my looks if I could; I am satisfied with my weight; I wish I looked better; I really like what I weigh; I wish I looked like someone else; people my own age like my looks; my looks upset me; I'm as nice looking as most people; I'm pretty happy with the way I look; I feel I weigh the right amount for my height; I feel ashamed of how I look; Weighting myself depresses me; my looks help me to get dates; I worry about the

way I look; I think I have a nice body; I'm as nice looking as I'd like to be ($\alpha = .87$; $M = 3.99$, $SD = .89$ Time1; $\alpha = .80$; $M = 4.88$, $SD = .90$ Time2).

Trait Anxiety Inventory. The Trait Anxiety Inventory (Speilberger, 1983) was used to examine participants' perceptions of overall body image. The original scale was updated to be a 7-point scale rather than a 5 -point scale, and only 16 of the original 20 items were included. Participants responded to the phrase: "Right now, I feel anxious, tense, or nervous about..." weight, thighs, buttocks, hips, stomach, legs, waist, muscle tone, ears, lips, wrists, hands, forehead, neck, chin, and feet ($\alpha = .91$; $M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.41$ Time1; $\alpha = .93$; $M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.47$ Time2).

Reputation of Company. Reputation was measured using seven bipolar adjective pairs. Adjectives included: not reputable/reputable; usually wrong/usually right; a follower/a leader; uninformed/well informed; last with new products/first with new products; ignorant/knowledgeable; unreliable/reliable ($\alpha = .94$; $M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.27$ Victoria's SecretTime1; $\alpha = .95$; $M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.04$ AerieTime1; $\alpha = .96$; $M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.45$ Victoria's SecretTime2; $\alpha = .96$; $M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.23$ AerieTime2)(Anderson & Robertson, 1995).

Brand Attitude. Overall attitude toward the organization was assessed with a global attitude measure adapted from Burgoon et al. (1978). It consisted six, 7-interval semantic differential scales including: good/bad, positive/negative, wise/foolish, valuable/worthless, favorable/unfavorable, and acceptable/unacceptable ($\alpha = .97$; $M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.53$ Victoria's SecretTime1; $\alpha = .96$; $M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.23$ AerieTime1; $\alpha = .98$; $M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.48$ Victoria's SecretTime2; $\alpha = .96$; $M = 5.06$, $SD = 1.15$ AerieTime2).

Purchase intent. Purchase intent was measured by combining two scales from Gill, Grossbart, and Laczniak (1988) and Urbany, Bearden, Kaicker, and Smith-de Borrero (1997). The questions asked participants if they had the opportunity, if they would purchase the organization's products. There were six bipolar adjective pairs. Adjective pairs included: unlikely/likely; nonexistent/existent; improbable/probable; impossible/possible; uncertain/certain; definitely would not/definitely would $\alpha = .94$; $M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.56$ Time1; $\alpha = .98$; $M = 4.64$, $SD = 1.88$ Time2).

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine how women's self-perceptions, brand attitude and purchase intent might change based on viewing lingerie ads depicting an ideal body or an average body.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that cultivation positively predicted women's scores on social attitudes toward appearance. Cultivation was determined by an additive scale of individuals' media use. A linear regression was run with cultivation as the predictor variable and attitude toward appearance as the criterion variable. Results indicate cultivation was not a good predictor of social attitudes toward appearance - internalization ($\beta = .06, p = .31$). Results indicate cultivation was not a good predictor of social attitudes toward appearance - awareness ($\beta = .10, p = .09$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. Exposure to media did not impact women's social attitudes toward appearance (dimensions of awareness or internalization).

Hypothesis 2 predicted women's perceptions of body esteem and overall body image change after viewing lingerie ads. The correlated t-test compared scores on *body esteem* prior to seeing an ad ($M = 3.99, SD = .89$) and *body esteem* after seeing an ad ($M = 4.89, SD = .05$). Body esteem increased significantly from Time 1 to Time 2 $t(314) = 26.44, p = .00$. The correlated t-test compared scores on *body image* prior to seeing an ad ($M = 4.92, SD = 1.41$) and *body image* after seeing an ad ($M = 4.73, SD = 1.47$). Body image significantly declined after viewing the ad $t(314) = 4.27, p = .00$. Hypothesis 2 was supported. Participants' body esteem significantly increased after viewing an ad, and their body image significantly declined after viewing an ad.

Hypothesis 4 predicted women's perception of an organization's reputation, brand attitude, and purchase intent of a brand will change after viewing lingerie ads. Participants'

attitudes toward Victoria's Secret significantly increased from Time 1 ($M = 4.66, SD = 1.43$) to Time 2 ($M = 4.88, SD = 1.34$), $t(311) = 3.43, p = .001$. Victoria's Secret's *reputation* did not significantly change from Time 1 ($M = 5.00, SD = 1.27$) to Time 2 ($M = 5.00, SD = 1.34$), $t(314) = .13, p = .90$. However, participants' rated Aerie's *reputation* significantly higher from Time 1 ($M = 4.51, SD = 1.04$) to Time 2 ($M = 5.00, SD = 1.34$), $t(313) = 6.30, p = .000$.

Participants' also rated their *brand* attitude toward Aerie significantly higher from Time 1 ($M = 4.65, SD = 1.23$) to Time 2 ($M = 4.94, SD = 1.58$), $t(313) = 3.19, p = .00$. Participants' *purchase intent* significantly increased from Time 1 ($M = 3.31, SD = 1.56$) to Time 2 ($M = 4.64, S.D. = 1.88$), $t(314) = 11.88, p = .00$. Hypothesis 4 was partially supported. Participants' attitudes toward the brand and purchase intent significantly increased after viewing an ad. However, there were mixed results for reputation. Those in the Aerie condition scored the organization's reputation higher after seeing an ad, but those in the Victoria's Secret condition had no change.

To examine Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 5, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed for the independent variable (company) and the dependent variables: body esteem, body image, attitudes toward the brand, and purchase intent.

Hypothesis 3 predicted those viewing an ad for Victoria's Secret would score lower on *body esteem* ($F(1, 314) = 1.52, p = .22, \eta^2 = .01$) and *body image* ($F(1, 314) = .80, p = .37, \eta^2 = .01$), compared to those viewing an Aerie ad. Those in the Victoria's Secret condition did have a slightly lower *body esteem* ($M = 4.82, SD = .91$) than those in the Aerie condition

($M = 4.95, SD = .89$) after viewing the ads, but it was not statistically significant. Those in the Victoria's Secret condition had a slightly higher *body image* ($M = 4.80, SD = 1.51$) than those in the Aerie condition ($M = 4.65, SD = 1.44$) after viewing the ads, but it was not statistically significant. Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5 stated those in the Victoria's Secret condition would have more negative attitudes toward the brand and be less likely to purchase lingerie compared to those viewing Aerie ads. Those in the Victoria's Secret condition had significantly lower *attitudes toward the brand* ($F(1, 314) = 21.78, p = .00, \eta^2 = .07$). Those exposed to a Victoria's Secret ad had significantly lower *attitudes toward the brand* ($M = 4.54, SD = 1.70$) compared to those exposed to an Aerie ad ($M = 5.34, SD = 1.33$). However, there were no statistically significant differences found for *purchase intent* ($F(1, 314) = .71, p = .40, \eta^2 = .01$). Those exposed to a Victoria's Secret ad had indicated they were less likely to purchase lingerie ($M = 4.55, SD = 2.06$) compared to those exposed to an Aerie ad ($M = 4.73, SD = 1.70$), but the mean difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is partially supported.

Table 1: Scores for Dependent Variables Based on Brand (Pre-Test)

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	Aerie	Victoria's Secret
Purchase Intent	3.30 (1.54)	3.32 (1.59)
Body Image	4.89 (1.37)	4.95 (1.45)
Body Esteem	4.02 (.84)	3.95 (.94)
Brand Attitude	4.67 (1.27)	4.83 (1.46)
Reputation	4.50 (1.06)	5.04 (1.22)

Note: Means and standard deviations (listed in parentheses) are listed. Purchase intent was measured by combining two scales from Gill et al. (1988) and Urbany et al (1997). Body image was measured using the Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983). Body esteem was measured using the scale by et al (1998). Reputation of brand was measured using Anderson and Robertson's (1995) Reputation of Company scale. Brand attitude was measured using Burgoon et al.'s scale (1978).

Table 2: Scores for Dependent Variables Based on Brand (Post-Test)

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Experimental Condition:</i>	
	<i>Aerie</i> (<i>n</i> = 158)	<i>Victoria's Secret</i> (<i>n</i> = 157)
Purchase Intent	4.73 (1.70)	4.55 (2.06)
Body Image	4.66 (1.44)	4.80 (1.51)
Body Esteem	4.95 (.89)	4.82 (.91)
Reputation of Brand	5.1 (1.23)	4.90 (1.45)
Brand Attitude	5.34 (1.33)	4.54 (1.33)

Note: Means and standard deviations (listed in parentheses) are listed. Purchase intent was measured by combining two scales from Gill et al. (1988) and Urbany et al (1997). Body image was measured using the Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983). Body esteem was measured using the scale by Mendelson et al (1998). Reputation of brand was measured using Anderson and Robertson's (1995) Reputation of Company scale. Brand attitude was measured using Burgoon et al.'s scale (1978).

Chapter 5

Discussion

The experiment was designed to examine the impact of advertising on consumers' body esteem, attitude toward brand, and purchase intent by using ads from Victoria's Secret and Aerie, featuring idealized and realistic body types.

Hypothesis 1 stated cultivation would positively predict women's scores on social attitudes toward appearance. Results found no support. Participants' social attitudes were assessed on two dimensions, where awareness measured participants' overall familiarity with beauty standards in the media, and internalization measured participants' self-perceptions in comparison with those beauty standards. Results revealed while cultivation did not predict participants' social attitudes toward appearance, the participants with higher cultivation scores exhibited higher awareness of thinness as a beauty standard in society and the media. Based on these results, it is possible that while the participants –especially those with more exposure to media –recognize what is considered beautiful; however, they are able differentiate ideality and reality and refrain from comparing themselves to the idealized bodies showcased in the media. Considering the mean age of the sample was 36.88 years old, it is also possible older women are more likely to realize that the images in advertising are often excessively retouched and are not realistic, and less willing to be affected by the ideality. In comparison, younger women, who are bombarded with daily messages of the need to be youthful and beautiful, may allow themselves to be swayed by such marketing messages. Although these results do not support the findings of Venderen and Kinnally's (2012) study, the difference may be attributed to the age factor, given Venderen and Kinnally's (2012) sample was entirely comprised of undergraduate female students while the current sample had a wide range in age, from 20 to 87 years.

Hypothesis 2 predicted women's perceptions of body esteem and overall body image would change after viewing lingerie ads. This hypothesis was supported; participants' body esteem increased significantly after being exposed to the advertisements, while, interestingly, the results for body image exhibited an opposite pattern, the scores significantly decreasing after ad exposure. These results support Hypothesis 2, in accordance with Merchant's (2002) study which revealed participants' self-perceptions involving body image changed after being exposed to advertisements containing idealized female bodies.

The opposite trends of changes in body esteem and body image may also be attributed to the age of the sample. While body esteem deals with the overall stability and self-esteem stemming from one's perception of the body, body image deals with a subjective analysis of specific body parts. It may be possible that while older women may have grown to be more confident in themselves, advertisements still provide them opportunities to compare their body parts to those of models in advertising. This effect may be amplified due to the fact that in lingerie advertisements, body parts such as the breasts, waist, thighs, legs, arms, and torso are made particularly visible compared to advertising for other products where such parts may be covered up. Therefore, lingerie ads may accentuate the thinness of these parts and cause anxiety in women who may acknowledge that the images may not be realistic, but nevertheless feel compelled to compare their own body parts to those of the model and feel anxious they may be overweight. This speculation is in support with Merchant's study (2002) which also found although participants were aware the images were "fake" and "unrealistic," their anxiety increased after exposure to ads containing idealized female bodies, compared to exposure to ads containing no bodies.

Hypothesis 4 predicted women's perception of an organization's reputation, brand attitude, and purchase intent of a brand will change after viewing lingerie ads. While participants' brand attitude, purchase intent, and attitudes toward both Victoria's Secret and Aerie significantly increased from pre-exposure to post-exposure, their scores on reputation significantly increased only for Aerie. The study had hypothesized Victoria's Secret's scores would decline, while Aerie's scores would increase. Although the scores for brand attitude, purchase intent, and attitudes toward brand significantly increased for both brands, it is worth noting the increase in scores was much higher for Aerie than it was for Victoria's Secret; in fact, prior to ad exposure, Aerie's scores were much lower than those of Victoria's Secret. After ad exposure, Aerie and Victoria's Secret had the same scores for each dependent variable. Given the purpose of advertisements is to promote the brand and convince their viewers to purchase products, it may explain why scores for Victoria's Secret increased; however, the fact that only Aerie's reputation significantly increased after viewing the ad may mean participants responded more favorably toward advertising promoting "real" bodies and approved of the ethical message it attempted to send to its consumers. Also, given the age group of the sample, it may be possible that participants were not as familiar with Aerie prior to exposure, but developed favorability toward the brand after seeing the ad.

Hypotheses 3 and 5 both involved the comparison between Victoria's Secret and Aerie. Hypothesis 3 predicted those viewing an ad for Victoria's Secret would score lower on body esteem and body image, compared to those viewing an ad for Aerie. Although it was not statistically significant, those in the Victoria's Secret condition did have a slightly lower body esteem and body image than those in the Aerie condition. Compared to the findings of Venkat and Harold (2002), who also examined the impact of advertising-induced social comparison on

consumers' purchase intent through ad exposure, the results of the current study may not be significant, but indicate a similar trend: a decline in esteem and body image after viewing advertisements. The age of the participants may be taken into account to interpret the findings; it is possible the effect of exposure to idealized bodies on a participant's body esteem and body image may be immediate, but in the current study, it is made mitigated by the stability associated with older ages.

Hypothesis 5 stated those in the Victoria's Secret condition would have more negative attitudes toward the brand and be less likely to purchase lingerie compared to those exposed to an Aerie ad. Hypothesis 5 was partially supported; those exposed to a Victoria's Secret ad had significantly lower scores on attitudes toward the brand compared to those exposed to an Aerie ad, but there were no statistically significant differences found for purchase intent. Those exposed to a Victoria's Secret ad had indicated they were less likely to purchase lingerie compared to those exposed to an Aerie ad but the mean difference was not statistically significant. These results support Venkat and Harold's (2002) findings, which state purchase intent is was dependent on locus of control. Similarly, the participants being more aware of the beauty norms but unwilling to internalize these norms and compare themselves –as evidenced by little change in their body esteem before and after ad exposure, as well as differences in internalization and awareness scores –exhibited little change in purchase intent. These results suggest although participants were aware that Victoria's Secret was promoting idealized beauty norms, the relative stability in esteem allowed them to remain unwavering in their purchasing decisions.

Limitations

The primary limitations of the study stem from the age and race of the participants. It is important to note the average age of the participants was 36.88 with a standard deviation of 13.16 and a range of 20 to 87 years of age. While it could be considered beneficial to have a wide age range in a sample, for this particular study, it may have prevented a collection of clear results representative of different age groups, producing a mixture of results across the board. Considering many studies that have found negative influence of advertising on body image and body esteem involve college-aged females or younger, it is a possibility the older population is more aware that ads are not realistic and is less prone to comparing themselves to the ideal female bodies present in the ads. Furthermore, considering that Aerie primarily markets to females of ages 15-21 while Victoria's Secret targets an older population, the participants of this study may have subconsciously favored Victoria's Secret more than Aerie due to their preexisting exposure to Victoria's Secret.

Additionally, the sample was not ethnically diverse. Given that more than three fourths of the participants were Caucasian, and all of them were from the U.S., the results may not correctly represent the perceptions of a global population.

Future Directions

In order to eliminate the limitations from the current study, a future study could implement a quota to ensure that the sample is more evenly ethnically distributed. Additionally, it would be interesting to focus on just one age group rather than having a wide range in age, to ensure the results reflect each sample correctly rather than portraying a mixed result across the board. Furthermore, a future study could follow the original cultivation framework and pre/post-

test design more faithfully by studying the effect of repeated ad exposure on participants over a longer period of time.

Practical Implications

Many studies assessing the relationship between advertising and viewers' self-esteem and body image had been focused on adolescents and young women. By sampling a wide range in age, the current study explores the effect of two brands' advertising on all consumers, not only their targets. The results of the study reveal although Victoria's Secret may still dominate the lingerie market, participants are still responding favorably to the marketing strategy of Aerie to portray more ethical images in their advertising. Participants' original scores of attitude toward brand and reputation, and the significant increases occurring after viewing the Aerie ad, show participants can develop favorability towards Aerie –or at least favor it just as much they do Victoria's Secret –after viewing just one ad. Although there was no statistically significant difference between participants' willingness to purchase products from each brand, the fact the difference between the brands was very small originally, and expanded after exposure, speak of the potential that a continued exposure to Aerie ads could have on consumers' perceptions of the brand and willingness to purchase. Considering that Aerie's sales have significantly increased since the launch of its Aerie "Real" campaign (up a staggering 18 percent from 2014 to 2015), it may be possible to predict a future in which giants branded with idealized beauty are overtaken by brands powered by more ethical marketing messages, promoting healthy image and esteem.

Appendix A

(IRB Approval)

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

Date: January 15, 2016

From: Julie James, IRB Analyst

To: Joo Park

Type of Submission:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	The Impact of Advertising on Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Organization
Principal Investigator:	Joo Park
Study ID:	STUDY00004044
Submission ID:	STUDY00004044
Funding:	Not Applicable
Documents Approved:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRP-591Research_Esther.pdf (3), Category: IRB Protocol • Aerie Summer.jpg (0.01), Category: Data Collection Instrument • estherscales.doc (0.01), Category: Data Collection Instrument

The Office for Research Protections determined that the proposed activity, as described in the above-referenced submission, does not require formal IRB review because the research met the criteria for exempt research according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations.

Continuing Progress Reports are **not** required for exempt research. Record of this research determined to be exempt will be maintained for five years from the date of this notification. If your research will continue beyond five years, please contact the Office for Research Protections closer to the determination end date.

Changes to exempt research only need to be submitted to the Office for Research Protections in limited circumstances described in the below-referenced Investigator Manual. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please contact the Office for Research Protections.

Penn State researchers are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual ([HRP-103](#)), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within CATS IRB (<http://irb.psu.edu>).

This correspondence should be maintained with your records.

Appendix B

(Ads Used)

TIME TO GET REAL.
TIME TO THINK REAL.
NO SUPERMODELS.
NO RETOUCHING.
BECAUSE...

**THE
REAL YOU
IS SEXY.**

#aerie REAL

A collage of six photographs showing women in various poses and outfits, including lingerie and casual wear, used in an advertisement.

new!
I  LOVE MY
BODY

BY VICTORIA™

Meet our newest bodies.
Body by Victoria® Racerback,
Multi-way and Push-up.

- shop now
- experience the bras

Three women modeling Victoria's Secret Body by Victoria bras and underwear.

Appendix C

(Scales Used)

Media Use (Cultivation)

On average, how many minutes a week do you:

Read a fashion magazine (e.g. Vogue, Elle, Marie Claire) ?

Read an entertainment magazine (e.g. Star, Ok!, People)?

Read an online women's magazine (e.g. Glamour, Cosmopolitan, Women's Health)?

Visit a makeup brand's website (e.g. MAC, L'Oreal, Maybelline)?

Visit a makeup blog (e.g. Makeupbag, Temptalia, TheMakeUpGirl)?

Watch reality television shows (e.g. Realhousewives, America's Next Top Model, Keeping Up With the Kardashians)?

Read a national newspaper (e.g. The New York Times, The Washington Post)?

Read a regional newspaper (e.g. The Daily Collegian)?

Watch a network news program?

Watch a cable news channel (e.g. Fox News, MSNBC)?

Read a news magazine (e.g. Time, Newsweek, The Economist)?

Scan the stories on an online news vendor (e.g. Google, MSN, Yahoo!, AOL)?

Watch celebrity news shows like those on the E! Network?

Social Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

I would like my body to look like the women who appear in lingerie ads.

I believe lingerie looks better on women that are in good physical shape.

Lingerie commercials that show women who are in good physical shape make me wish I were in better physical shape.

I wish to look like the women in lingerie ads.

I tend to compare my body to people in magazines and on TV.

In our society, fat people are regarded as unattractive.

Lingerie ads of physically fit women make me wish I had more muscle tone.

Attractiveness is very important if you want to get ahead in our culture.

It's important for people to look attractive if they want to succeed in today's culture.

I wish I looked like women pictured in magazines who model lingerie.

I often read magazines like Cosmopolitan, Vogue, and Glamour and compare my appearance to the models.

A physically fit woman is admired for her looks more than someone who is not fit and toned.

In today's society, it's not important to always look attractive.

How I look does not affect my mood in social situations.

People find individuals who are in shape more attractive than individuals who are not in shape.

I compare my physique to that of women pictured in lingerie ads.

I compare my appearance to people who I consider very attractive.

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LION AMBASSADORS

Strategic Planning Committee (2014-2015), Marketing Head for Guard the Lion Shrine (2015)

- Worked with the president to evaluate and revise the organization's 5-year development plan as well as to address issues raised by the general body
- Organized and led a team to market the annual event, Guard the Lion Shrine, utilizing traditional and creative marketing tactics

IFC/PANHELLENIC DANCE MARATHON (THON)

Public Relations Committee Member (2014), Dancer Relations Committee Member (2015, 2016)

- Ensured THON events and fundraisers were widely publicized through social media and flyering
- Escorted press and managed media coverage throughout THON weekend
- Underwent year-long training to maintain dancer's emotional, mental, and physical health during THON weekend
- Served as liaison to the press during dancer and THON family interviews

THE PENN STATE PERFORMING ARTS COUNCIL (PAC)

A Cappella/Voice Genre Marshal (2015-2016)

- Worked as representative of genre to promote collaboration and unity within the Penn State performing arts community
- Facilitated communication between the a cappella groups and the University to promote the arts
- Organized and executed the annual A Cappella Sampler in Schwab Auditorium

THE CODA CONDUCT

President (2014-2015, 2015-2016)

- Oversaw the executive board and the administrative functions of the a cappella group
- Collaborated with various student organizations to contribute to philanthropy (UNICEF, Global Brigades, Walk Multiple Sclerosis, the Sight Loss Support Group of Centre County)
- Crowned Quarterfinal Champions of the Mid-Atlantic region for the 2015 International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (Special Awards: Best Arrangement, Best Vocal Percussion)
- Successfully raised \$5,000 to record album, to be released in April 2016

HONORS & AWARDS:

Student Leader Award
Roth Honors Award in Communications
Davis Ethics Award
Washington Media Fellows Scholarship
Philip Jaisohn Journalism Scholarship
Phi Beta Kappa
Kappa Tau Alpha